

Humor? Romance? Tragedy? Irony? You Find Them All WHEN THE LOVE GOD GRINS at Stage and Society Folk Scurrying West to be Reno-vated

RENO is the concentrated essence of human life. There is no more interesting place in the world for the study of human nature. Within its narrow limits are to be found humor, romance, irony and tragedy—in short, everything that life either a pleasure or an insupportable burden. It is a town of only 11,000 inhabitants, but in spite of its size it contains enough psychological tangles for a metropolis. It is a conglomeration of human emotions, its countless tragedies, its pathetic comedies, its daily intrigues, while through it all runs an element of mystery which gives added interest to every-changing show.

The town has for some time been the haven of those who have suffered shipwreck upon the sea of matrimony. Many a woman who has embarked on its treacherous waters has been obliged to put the port of Reno for the purpose of dropping her repentant or mutinous pilot. Some of them have been taking on another in his place while they are resting at anchor in the harbor and have come to their voyages in safety, while others have been unfortunate in their selection of a steering officer each time they took on a new one they found him trustworthy than the preceding.

RENO has come to be the refuge of broken hearts—a place for misfit couples to be renovated. On the surface it seems to be nothing more than a large shifting population in a small town, an endless parade of strangers, here to-day and gone to-morrow. But in spite of it all Reno itself is peaceful and untroubled. It has ceased to wonder at the passing of time. Occasionally it stops to smile grimly over the particular irony of life which has come within its gates, but it soon moves on in the quiet of its daily life.

The first influx of divorce seekers came as a surprise to Reno as a town to account for it. The divorce laws of Nevada were no less stringent than those of any other State. But it was soon explained that the others required a year's residence before a divorce could be granted. In Nevada only six months were required. This had not been done with an idea of luring matrimonial misfits, but to make citizens of those who roamed about the hills prospecting and rarely had a year in one place. Those who wanted their legal bonds severed were quick to take advantage of the law. And the human mistakes of the nation were being poured into Reno.

It was Mrs. W. E. Corey, wife of the president of the Steel Trust, that started the ball rolling. She was first to bring Reno to the attention of the outside world as a hospital for matrimonial ills. Then Nat Brown took the trail across the Continental Divide in search of a separation from Maxine Elliott, and the work which he did for himself was equally beneficial for Reno and expectant lovers of freedom began by every train. Instantly Reno began to sit up and take notice. Gamblers and prospectors stood by in open-mouthed amazement at the arrival of gorgeously dressed ladies from the East. The stolid Indians who idled in front of the windows or sat hunched upon the sidewalk with their backs against the walls of the buildings grunted and snorted as the stylish white squaws passed by. Fat paposes gurgled with delight and held out their greasy hands beseechingly whenever they caught a glimpse of a glittering diamond necklace. And the merchants suddenly became conscious of beautiful blondes and fascinating brunettes who came into their places to order an English chop for Fido or purchase a case of champagne.

Hotels and apartment houses sprang up as if by magic. The owners of the general stores began buying to New York and Paris to purchase a stock of goods which had never been dreamed of by the brush society. The women of Reno began to pull down their waists and wear "gowns" instead of dresses. They also began to affect agonizing coiffures, such as had been exhibited by the beautiful ladies in the Fifth Avenue of Reno.

The town has recovered from the first shock now and pays but little attention to the comedies, the romances and the tragedies which are daily enacted within its confines. The inhabitants have become accustomed to the chug of automobiles. They see their so-called functions invaded by the liberty brigade without an eyelash. They watch Mrs. New York's efforts to keep her identity a secret almost with a smile. They have long since ceased to be shocked by the union in holy wedlock of a lonely wife and a loving husbandless wife. They are no longer affected by the sorrow of luckless children who have been separated from one of their parents because they could not understand each other. Reno has almost no time at all become blasé and sophisticated.

The "transient residents" of Reno include among their number the unhappy of all classes of society and misfits of all nations. The upper crust has come to Mrs. Henry Spies Kip and Mrs. Keith Donald, who was called the "million dollar bride," and other victims of once brilliant social alliances who were founded on wealth and convenience. Many have sent an offering of dimpled beauties, some of whom were married on wagers and have no other husbands now that the money has been exhausted while others are there for the purpose of exchanging mere chorus men for millionaires. Mario was a member of this colony for some time and his blonde daintiness was for a few days the talk of town, but Reno soon grew tired of that even. It was a great deal to startle Reno now.

REGINA HARNED caused a passing sensation on her arrival at the Riverside Hotel with Miss Gordon. In the evening she came down to the ballroom in a real Calif. Soeurs dress, gathered closely to the knees, so that only tiny steps could be taken, with a long, long train. Her hat was a Neapolitan,

with a bunch of towering greenish uncured ostrich feathers. Miss Gordon wore a black velvet frocked marked plainly with the cachet de Paris. The Reno which had not quite outgrown its buckskins and som-breros caught its breath, gasped for a moment and then subsided into nonchalant indifference. Shortly afterward Miss Harned and her companion rented a little brown house on the banks of the Truckee River, where they passed the remainder of their stay in the town.

Arundel Smith, pretty and "deucedly English, don't you know," went there all the way from "India's coral strand" for the improvement of her matrimonial health. The son of an English brewer repented of a too hasty alliance with a music hall artist and hit the trail for Reno to seek remission of his sin. He soon met his heart's desire in the person of an Anglicized American matron, but it was only a few weeks before she, too, had arrived in the haven of restless ones begging balm for her broken heart. Mrs. Elsie A. Harrison, a beautiful woman and talented artist, appeared there one day for the purpose of rectifying a foolish elopement committed at the romantic age of sixteen. Reno has an international reputation as a health resort for matrimonial breakdowns.

NOT all the members of the divorce colony are from the "400" or the stage. More than half probably are working their way. They come from the mass of American people and enter at once into the business life of the town. Stenographers, dressmakers, laundresses, telephone operators, waitresses, manicurists and hairdressers, any trade or profession you may think of, they are all there for the same purpose. It is a never ending procession. They come and go, followed by another contingent to fill in the vacant places.

It is not an unusual thing for a member of the colony to enter a shop and ask for her favorite sales-lady, only to find her gone. If she asks what has become of her, the answer is always the same.

"Why, don't you know? She got hers last Wednesday, and she declared she couldn't stay another minute. I thought you knew that her time was about up."

The men are a little more stealthy in their comings and goings than the women. They sneak into town overnight, buy up a business from some departing brother, change the name on the window and start in where he left off. Probably your favorite cigar store is owned by a candidate for divorce, who hires similar liberty seekers as his clerks. Lawyers who have been prominent in the East rent offices on a six-month lease, hang out their shingles, and represent a hundred anxious clients before their own cases are called. You just get accustomed to your waiter at the hotel when he "gets his" and leaves for parts unknown.

With the men employment is an important factor in establishing a residence, and their frantic searches for something that can be called employment furnish great amusement for the colony. Chauffeurs and waiters have an easy time finding something to do, for they are greatly in demand, but hundreds are obliged to take what they can get. The wealthy president of an Eastern bank worked as a chauffeur during his entire stay. He was known to his employers as "George." A druggist from Illinois became a bartender in one of the best appointed saloons in the main street. A silver-tongued minister of the gospel went to work in the freight yards of the Southern Pacific Railroad. The clerk who sells you your socks may be a millionaire in disguise, and the delivery boy of your favorite grocery may be a doctor or an architect.

AS a rule the floating citizens of Reno are very secretive and questions are not popular. Inquisitive people are snubbed as not fit persons to move in the best society. Many of the colonists do not want the outside world to know where they are. As a proof of this one has only to see the nightly parade to the Southern Pacific station. Every evening there is a steady procession of divorce candidates on its way to the railroad mailbox. A railway postmark tells no tales, and in this way the recipients of the epistles may be left completely in the dark as to one's whereabouts. This custom is known among the colonists as "The Convict's Resort," and knowing smiles are exchanged when two conspirators meet at the mail box.

Last year when the census man arrived in Reno pandemonium reigned for several days. He was about as welcome a visitor to the seekers of freedom as a red rag to a herd of gentlemen kine. They considered him altogether too inquisitive, and they cast about them for some way in which to evade him. The only persons who held authoritative positions in the town with whom they were intimately acquainted were the judges who tried the divorce cases. So the fair unknowns called upon Judges Orr and Pike.

They wanted to know if the good, kind judges couldn't tell them some way to escape from the awful census enumerator, but the kind judges frankly told them that it was dangerous to trifle with the agents of Uncle Samuel and that the best course was to stand right up and be counted. It had another advantage also, as it established residence of the prospective litigant beyond the shadow of doubt, and this is a valuable asset when one goes divorcing.

But in spite of the advice of the judges, the census man did not have easy sailing. When he swooped down on the Colonial and Stewart apartment houses he found that a great many of the occupants were away on trips. Coachmen and maids had suddenly become deaf and dumb. Butlers and grocers, much to their own regret, had never learned the English language. Even the very dogs in the streets were muzzled. The census man was clearly in a predicament. He was persisting, however, and sometimes he caught his prey naked and gained admittance.

At such times he would begin with the usual questions about the name, age, color and ancestral history of the residents. Then he would move on to the divorce queries, and that's where the embarrassing feature came in. It is a bother to have to tell in detail about one's previous husbands and wives, especially when one may not have kept a notebook. How could

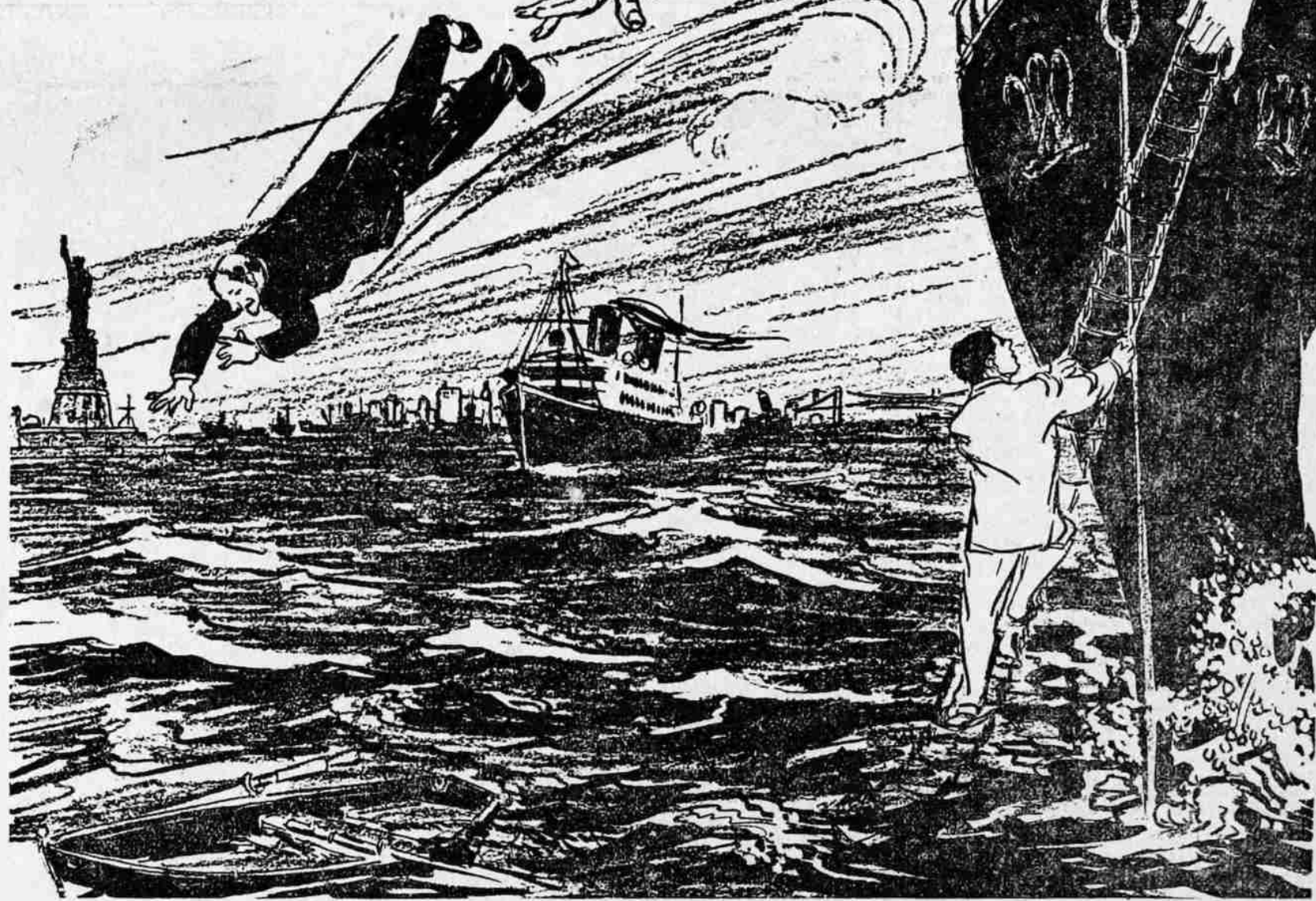
a woman be expected to know the full name of her second or third husband when she was about to shed her tenth?

Despite the difficulties, however, the census man succeeded in rounding up more than two hundred divorced folks and put their life stories down on the blanks.

THERE have been many new romances born from the ashes of the old ones at Reno. The little city has acted as a sort of clearing house for the re-mating of the misfits. Their parties in the homes, the dances at the roadhouses and the late parties at the cafes have been responsible for awakening in the heart of many a man and woman a fire which they had long thought extinguished. In spite of former protestations to the contrary, they find themselves willing to try again, hoping that this time it will "take."

Alice Johnson of New York met also divorced Attorney-General Stoddard of Nevada at an evening gathering at Reno, and considered him interesting enough to marry, so they went to the judge who had given each of them their decrees and became one again. Mrs. Freida Thaw Pett, who had already made two unsuccessful attempts to get a husband whom she could put up with and who would stick, fell in love with a young mining engineer who attended some of her entertainments, with the result that she is now Mrs. Young and lives in a mining camp far away among the mountains, and it is said that at last she is happy. Mrs. Henry Spies Kip also chose the simple life for her last experiment. She has married a young mining superintendent and gone to live among the snowy peaks of California. It seems almost a repetition of the tales of Bret Harte.

There is tragedy, too, in the chaos of Reno's daily life. Many tender hearts are broken in the very operation of mending others. There are plenty of husbands and wives who really love and who realize that the differences between them and their spouses have been brought about by simple misunderstandings that could be easily cleared up if the other would only listen



This Man Not Afraid of the Kaiser; He Proved It.

STORIES of the Emperor's amusing doings at the regatta at Kiel and afterward are creeping out. While his yacht Meteor was crossing a bar of the River Trave on the way into the lower Lubbeck harbor at Travemünde, an aged pilot came aboard to take charge. To his annoyance he saw a person he did not recognize at the yacht's tiller. The veteran walked up the deck and exclaimed:

"Young man, it is against the rules for amateurs to take big yachts over this bar."

The Emperor made no motion to leave the tiller, so the pilot ordered:

"Hand over that tiller."

Still the Emperor did not budge.

"Look here!" shouted the sea dog, "are you piloting this yacht or am I?"

Then the Emperor burst out laughing, left the wheel, hurried down to the pilot with the imperial card, on which he had scribbled the words: "Quite right; you are pilot, William Rex."

Did Best He Could.

IN the absence of the regularly appointed spokesman, Mr. Makinbrakes had reluctantly consented to make a presentation speech.

"Miss Higham," he said, "unfortunately it is my—er—fortunate lot to fill the embarrassing—the pleasant duty of—of—inflicting a few remarks upon this occasion—which is highly appreciated, I assure you, and by none more so than myself, for the season

that—in short, as I may say, it falls to my lot to convey, so to speak, the assurances of—that is, with the assurance of those to whom—to whom I have occasion to refer to—more or less—in this connection together with the best wishes, if I may so express myself, of those who have clubbed together—who have associated themselves—not that you need anything of the kind, of course, but as a token of—as a token of—with which few remarks, Miss Higham, it is my—my pleasant surprise to hand you this gold watch and chain. I—I thank you."

Suspicious Well Founded.

IN a country police court recently a man was charged with shooting a number of pigeons, the property of a farmer. In giving his evidence the farmer was so careful that he even seemed nervous, and the solicitor for the defense endeavored to frighten him.

"Now," he remarked, "are you prepared to swear on oath that this man shot your pigeons?"

"I didn't say he did shoot them," was the carefully worded reply. "I said I suspected him o' doing it."

"Ah, now we're coming to it. What made you suspect that man?"

"Well, firstly, I caught him on my land wi' a gun. Secondly, I heard a gun go off, and saw some pigeons in his pocket—and I don't hardly think them birds flew there and committed suicide."